

THE LABOUR ORGANISER

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IS IT COMING?

As we go to press this month the air is full of rumours of an impending General Election. Perhaps before this issue reaches our readers the Election will be on us. And the chances are equal that a little breathing time may yet be left to us to complete the preparations for the most vital electoral struggle in the history of our Party.

That supreme folly, euphemistically called the "National Government," already shows signs of disintegration. Professedly called into being to enact a single measure or at any rate a series of measures with a single end, it is admitted before its proposals actually get to the Statute Book that its remedies are not remedies at all, and that the danger or the evil which was the origin of its being, remains as big as before. What a comment on the futility of the facile pharisees, lately in our ranks, who have found it in the "national interests" to support the New Government!

At the present moment the ill-assorted members of the combination seem more engrossed in the task of manoeuvring for place in the coming General Election handicap than in applying themselves seriously to the pressing problems of Government. They have rolled down the precipice on which they stand a boulder that is to injure and rebound among the working classes for a long time to come. But Labour must storm the heights and only a Labour Majority can undo the injury done and restore the country to real prosperity.

The creation of that Labour Majority is the task that must largely be the work of the readers of the "Labour Organiser." We do not minimise the immensity of the difficulties of the present hour, or the disadvantages of the situation which may be created by the many-hued enemies of Labour—now, thank goodness, altogether where we want them, in one vulnerable mass!

The issues of the coming election—and we suppose it will come, if not to-morrow, in the very early future—will probably be more confused than in any recent election, but Labour can make the issue clear. Two years of Minority Government have proved that there is no halting house that will satisfy our ranks. We want Labour's own programme and that only. The first thing then is that MAJORITY.

The biggest task in the coming election will probably fall to comrades in those constituencies who have got in sight of victory owing to the division of our enemies. There will be less three-cornered fights in this election. All the more reason for bigger determination and more supreme efforts.

Supreme efforts. In this election we shall need to call up the last man and the last woman. Are the calling-up papers ready? Are the details of mobilisation planned out? Has the plan of campaign been thought of? And is the commissariat and ammunition ready? These are the questions of the hour for "Labour Organiser" readers.

The Prime Minister has told us to tighten our belts. We always do that on going into action. Once again we will take the advice that Ramsay MacDonald gives us; but not in the sense in which he meant it.

In this issue we have tried to help our readers in the stages of preparation. If there is another issue before the election comes and in each succeeding issue before the election, we shall do the same.

Meantime let us be of good spirits. The fight will be a famous fight. The prize is high; the penalty of defeat too awful to look upon twice.

To-day we get ready, and to-morrow—forth the banners go!

On to a Labour Majority!

Money for the Election

Make Poverty a Party Asset.

There is more scratching of heads at the prospects of an immediate General Election than perhaps has ever taken place before in our Party, and yet who is not confident that come what may Labour will rise to the occasion, and discharge its obligations as it has ever done before?

We are not, however, altogether without a parallel. The snap election of 1923 found Labour with its funds exhausted by the election of the previous year, and with many of its financed candidates withdrawn by Unions whose Executive had wrongly assumed that Mr. Bonar Law's government was going to last for some years.

Yes, someone says, but in 1922 we had not three million people unemployed! Quite true, and it is because someone will say that, and because the problem is certainly bigger on this occasion, that this article is written.

We need make no secret about it that a larger proportion than ever of the candidatures will now be financed out of funds raised principally in the candidate's own Division. We cannot, of course, foresee what even a few weeks may produce, and it is possible that a number of Trades Union candidatures will be found at the last minute. This, however, will not now much affect the proportion between "financed" and "unfinanced" Labour candidatures, though on the other hand the general awakening of the Trades Union Movement to the perils of the political situation may result, and we hope it will, in handsome donations to the central fund.

For the purpose of this article, however, we must leave out of count central funds—if there are to be any. Our desire is to discuss the situation with those who at present find themselves with empty coffers in face of the coming contest.

Let there be no mistake about it. Labour's poverty can be made one of Labour's chief assets if the election is forced upon us. Many of our Parties have fought before in similar circumstances, and they have come through. But have we ever fought an election before following such a terrific attack upon the standards of the workers, and at which the workers had so much to lose?

This is the key-note of the situation. For the workers of this country, it is now or never for a Labour Majority,

or at any rate, now or never for a jolly long time. The workers must know, and we must make them know, that anything but the return of a triumphant Labour Majority means for them an appalling degree of misery commencing immediately, and that if they would save themselves they must at this election fight with a vigour, and a unity unsurpassed in the history of the struggles of the workers throughout the world.

Can we rouse them to it? The answer to that depends upon whether we are aroused ourselves; whether the defeatist spirit is still abroad in our ranks, and whether every Party is prepared to figuratively take its jacket off and fight like blazes to gain the day.

We predict that the events of the next month are going to do much to put this fighting spirit into our ranks, but agents and organisers and all concerned must realise that the money problem is only going to be solved, and that it will be solved, if the deep resentment of the workers reaches its proper plinth.

And what then? All through the election, and now, Labour should unblushingly proclaim its poverty. We want funds. Is there any shame in that? Why hesitate to tell the people?

It may be true that in past elections most Parties have made collections at meetings, issued subscription sheets, invitations to Trades Unions, etc., to forward donations. But that won't be enough this time. Even in the most poverty-stricken Division in the country there are enough people of our way of thinking to sufficiently finance the election contest if the right degree of determination is forthcoming.

Why hide from our meetings that we want pounds this time, not pennies. It is true there may be meetings where ten shillings is not to be found in the whole audience, but in the vast majority of meetings there is money, and money to spare in the pockets of those present.

Meetings must be made to produce more; they can produce more. Earnest pushing, pleading and presentation of our case will ensure that this end is attained. Let us look to meetings at any rate for five or ten times as much as they have ever produced before.

And subscriptions. What system shall we adopt to collect money? Are our collectors content to accept pennies, threepences and an occasional shilling,

or will they be willing to occasionally demand ten bob—and get it? We refuse to believe that against the great onslaught on the workers' standards, the workers themselves will not be prepared to pay more than ever they have in defence of their Cause, and in aid of Labour contests. If the pessimist reads these lines and smiles we warn him that he is one of those we number as our enemies on this occasion. If the spirit is there there need be no fear that the workers will respond. Are your sleeves rolled up?

And the Trades Unions. Already the Trades Union Congress have given the lead. They have sounded the bugle. It is our business to see that the notes are heard in every Trades Union branch throughout the land. The response will be both in money and in men. It must be put up to Trades Union branches and other Labour organisations that this fight is **THE FIGHT**. It is a desperate fight; it is a fight in which one gives all, or nearly all, in service and in money. Let a Tory Government go back and the hopes of the Trades Unionist may well recede till he has little at all to hope for.

There is one other suggestion we have to make. Some constituencies will be well financed. These are the lucky ones. What will be their contributions to the common pool? We say it is unfair and it is anti-Labour if there are to be Labour Parties in the country relieved of all financial obligations, and these Parties do not realise the plight of their neighbours, and the tremendous responsibility resting on the whole Movement to-day.

Not a single one of these financed constituencies should neglect its opportunities to collect money. The election must be a money-raising election all the way through. Financed constituencies should as a moral obligation raise money first for their next door neighbour, for the other constituencies in their county, and for the National Central Fund. To do so will actually strengthen themselves in their fight. Joining common cause with workers throughout the country will reinvigorate their Movement as nothing else can do. We profoundly believe that workers in the financed constituencies are ready and willing to give to those in less favoured places. There will be a responsibility resting on the heads of any who deprive the workers of this opportunity.

One more hint. Our Committee rooms windows on this occasion should bear our appeals for money. Every Committee Rooms should have facilities for the payment of donations, and all possible publicity for these facilities. Not only every meeting, but every handbill might be made the agent of collection. It is by bringing home to the worker on every occasion how much depends upon him, his money and his service, that the great mass will be moved to give to Labour the opportunity it asks for to reconstruct our social system, and bring the worker into his own.

DID YOU INSURE AGAINST A WET SUMMER?

In the February issue of the "Labour Organiser" (by the way, was February the driest month this year?) we advised our readers on the question of insuring against loss of profit on big outdoor functions due to weather conditions. Some enquiries were received for further particulars, but we have no information as to whether any of our readers were wise in time and actually accepted the advice we gave them in ample time. On the other hand we have heard many stories of severe losses suffered by Local Parties during our recent damp and dismal summer, due to wash-outs, floods, tempests and all the other summer-like conditions we have "enjoyed."

It is small consolation to those who have suffered loss to be reminded that we told you so. But we do wish to emphasise the point that Local Parties with slender reserves ought not to undertake big risks with outdoor functions without taking the reasonable precaution of insuring. In most cases where loss has this year been sustained the rates for insurance next year will be appreciably higher, nevertheless this matter is worthy of the earnest consideration of those responsible for outdoor fetes and galas next summer. Perhaps it will not always rain, but nevertheless even in a dry summer the risk remains, and it is better to put this on the backs of Insurance Companies.

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ADVICE ON GOING INTO ACTION.

The election may be here next month. On the other hand it may not. Therefore, please do not get excited at every press stunt. There is always time to think. And this time we must think hard, and make our plans for victory with deadly deliberation, not to say determination.

First "catch your hare" is advice that must be taken by some constituencies even yet. The placings for the General Election are not complete and it is just a little comforting to know that the enemy is in the same position.

But a more important grain of comfort for constituencies yet without candidates is that a fight is not necessarily less successful because a candidate comes late in the field. But candidates must now be found. Don't overlook the local field, and remember that emergency procedure may be sanctioned by the Head Office of the Labour Party to ensure a quick selection and a good get-away.

Whoever is going to take a leading part in the coming election simply must procure a copy of the Labour Party's new book on the "Conduct of Elections." It is fool-hardiness for electioneers to imagine that an election machine is something which any Johnnie can run without first learning something about it. Obtuse ignorance is responsible for endless muddle at elections, and the loss of valuable votes. The untrained electioneer who shuts his mind to the experience of those who have made a life-time study of the job, reminds one of the man who runs a car but does not know what is wrong when the petrol is shut off. Get to know something more about the works.

If the election comes we shall see a closer alliance between the industrial and political wings of Labour than has existed for a long time. It is more than ever worth while cultivating the Trades Union branches now, and when the election comes see that Trades Union officials get their fair share of both the work and the limelight. They must be with us in this, and we don't think they will want asking twice.

Election envelopes should be bought now. Credit can be obtained till the

election. Don't, however, buy blindly. Have a clear idea as to what will be inserted in the envelope, for this will govern the size ordered. Order enough for leakages, and be sure to have envelopes upon which are printed Mr. Mrs. and Miss. At a recent by-election we received clear evidence that some electors were offended at receiving envelopes addressed without prefixes.

Directly the new registers come to hand the envelopes should be written up, whether an election is declared or no. It is worth while taking a risk that the election will come in the currency of this register, if it is not here already. The writing up of the envelopes at the earliest possible moment will release workers for the actual contest; more care will be taken on the job and risk of errors will be lessened.

Canvass cards should be ordered now. The single canvass card is undoubtedly the best device, and this system should be used wherever practicable. Writing up these cards should be commenced directly the register is available. If pasted registers must be used the sooner arrangements for this work are in hand the better. Don't leave this job till the last minute.

Equally, provision can be made now for Committee Room use of the registers. Wall boards may be prepared and got ready for pasting if number of sheets are not to be utilised. Discard the makeshift and out-of-date royal straw board on which one so often sees several pages of the register pasted. Work is facilitated if strawboards are cut by the printer in to lengths a little wider than the register. These may then be hinged with adhesive tape so that the wall board can be folded up or extended as desired.

The Labour Party's election parcel should be to hand now in every constituency. The appropriate officers should make themselves familiar with the forms, and those that will not be required may be put aside. Mistakes are avoided when the parcel is ordered in good time, and there is familiarity with its contents.

Now is also the time to begin in earnest, if not already done, collecting the names and addresses of car owners.

Don't neglect also to procure an up-to-date photograph of the candidate. It is not too early to order blocks if some idea exists as to the use to which they will be put. It is poor economy to use blocks from which long runs were taken at the last election.

This reminds us of the election estimate. Never think of entering an election without a proper idea of what it is going to cost, and the direction in which money will be spent. The first estimate may require revision. The election run without a financial forecast is as bad as an election run without any plan at all. Make up your mind this time that on both these heads the election campaign shall be as near perfection as possible.

Many Labour election agents in the past have neglected to send out to the absent voters. Don't make that mistake this time. If we read the signs of the times aright there will be a heavy Labour vote from the army and navy forces. Take this matter in time for in any case there is never much time to lose in sending communications to absent voters. Study the regulations and prepare special literature. This course will pay.

An election agent must, of course, be appointed for every contest. A trained and suitable person should be procured at the earliest practical moment. The agent's appointment need not be made yet, and in fact should not be made until the election is actually imminent, but the selection of the agent can proceed at once, and the earlier the better.

Please don't think of running the election without the telephone. There are many Divisions with their Central Committee Rooms already in view where it would pay to instal the telephone without waiting till the political atmosphere becomes clearer. There is always some delay in installation, and the time has gone by when elections could be run without the immediate contact which the telephone gives one with all parts of the Division.

An Election News-Sheet is, of course, a modern necessity. No time should be lost in securing estimates, and in coming to decisions regarding the size and get-up of the paper. This matter is worthy of more thought than

is usually given to it. We would prefer two small editions of a paper to one large single issue. Three editions are even better if they punctuate the campaign at suitable periods.

The Labour Party is hard at work preparing new literature. Headquarters' publications have the advantage of cheapness and authoritative-ness. Don't run away with the idea that locally you can do something better, and that your brains are altogether superior to those who produce the national literature. You may not be right, but in any case it is only fair to the electors that the official Labour Party view should be put before them in official Labour Party literature. You have lots of chance to show what you can do in the local news-sheets and with your handbills.

Hints to canvassers generally take the form of advice on canvassing. At the Woolwich By-election a novel note was struck by giving the canvassers something more on the lines of "Notes for Speakers." They were given a selection of telling facts and arguments that might be used when meeting electors. This course is probably better than telling experienced canvassers over and over again how to do their job.

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CANVASS! CANVASS!!

CANVASS!!!

Priceless Words of Wisdom from the Labour Party's Book "The Conduct of Elections."

In the following extract from "The Conduct of Elections" (price 5/-, The Labour Party) the ethics of canvassing are admirably discussed and rarely indeed has the case for systematic canvassing been better put than in these words by Harold Croft. The book of course proceeds to give detailed hints on canvass procedure and how to conduct a canvass.

One of the first steps in an election should be to provide every responsible officer with a copy of this book.

"The general consensus of opinion of electioneers is that meetings do not win elections, but that it is the doorstep work which tells. Why is this so? It is obvious that meetings are a necessity, and that they have considerable effect on those who attend, both in confirming them in their opinion, and inducing them to resolve to vote. But the meetings only really directly affect about one-eighth of the electorate.

"The canvassing of to-day is essentially visitation of the electors. It would be impossible to devote five or ten minutes to each house. The ap-

proach is one of regard for the electors and to interest them in the literature and meetings of a candidate. Their particular opinions as revealed or expressed are duly noted as most important records for the agent.

"The visiting of electors is so important because in a good canvass a candidate's workers will have covered nearly 90 per cent. of the electors. Canvassing—as legally considered—is the soliciting of voters by a person using persuasion or his personal influence on behalf of a particular candidate. Most of the 'canvassers' who help the Labour Party would hardly come under the legal definition. These are not soliciting votes so much as recording the intent of voters.

"But still the question remains, why should canvassing or visitation be superlatively essential and important? It cannot be the canvassing itself, because the opinions of people are not, in general, changed by callers at a door. The explanation is of the simplest, and because it is so obvious it is apt to be overlooked.

"The personal call of a representative of a candidate on an elector creates a feeling of personal contact and interest. Electors are very human and are susceptible to the sense of fellowship.

Calling on them just adds the touch of associating them with the cause, and puts them in a mood to respond to the call and go to the poll.

"The candidate must face the fact that if this visitation of electors is ignored the personal touch will be lacking and the poll will not fulfil expectation. How often electors are heard to say 'Why should I trouble? No one has asked me for my vote!' The person does not mean that his vote was available for anyone who asked—he meant his vote was of value to someone—but that someone had not troubled himself about it.

"Visitation of electors is a definite obligation. Electors are human, and a candidate and his representatives appealing for their suffrages owe them the courtesy of a visit.

"But the organisation value of the canvass is the vital fact for the agent. Without the ascertained record of the disposition of voters, his polling day organisation is reduced almost to futility or at the best, hopelessly limited. A good canvass gives the agent information as to the extent and distribution of Labour support in the electorate, and on polling day he can use the whole resources of his organisation and helpers to get those electors to record their votes.

"During the course of the election the daily canvassing returns are giving the agent knowledge of the progress of the campaign, of the strength or weakness of districts, and enabling him to distribute his campaign efforts where they are particularly needed.

"A good canvass gives the election agent his index of the Labour vote—without a canvass he has only a vast uncharted electorate in which his organisation aimlessly flounders amid the tumult and the shouting."

ANSWERS IN BRIEF.

E.R.—Get the new edition of Arnold's Municipal Corporations Act.

H. (Blackpool).—Returning Officers' charges were abolished in 1918. You apparently are in possession of a very old Labour Party Election Expenses Return Form.

Enquirer (Leith).—Don't buy old law books because they are cheap. The book you name is hopelessly out of date.

Miss L.—We can put you in touch with a source of supply. The tea retails at 1/6 returning 3d. per pound profit. We found it good.

Mac.—Wait and see.

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QUESTIONS ANSWERED HERE

When Absence Disqualifies a Councillor.

Question.—I shall be much obliged if you will give me your opinion on the following case:—

A member of the local Town Council has failed to attend any meetings of the Council for more than six months; it would appear that he does not intend to attend any further meetings, yet he will not tender his resignation. The Town Clerk is of the opinion that Section 39 (I) of the M.C.A., 1882, applies to cases of continuous absence from the Borough, and not continuous absence from the Council. The Councillor has continued to reside in the borough.

I am of the opinion that the intention of the Legislature was to prevent the Council from being deprived of the services of a councillor for more than six months, except in case of illness.

Answer.—Unfortunately, in the present instance the Town Clerk is quite right. Apparently the Council referred to is a Borough Council, and the Section of the Act quoted puts the position clearly. The Act reads: "if a Councillor is, except in the case of illness, continuously absent from the Borough . . . for more than six months he shall thereupon immediately become disqualified and shall cease to hold office. In any such event the Council shall forthwith declare the office to be vacant, and signify the same by notice signed by three members of the Council and countersigned by the Town Clerk and fixed on the Town Hall, and the office shall thereupon become vacant."

The Municipal Corporations Act, 1882, does not disqualify a Councillor merely for not acting as a Councillor, but on the other hand it does not permit of any excuse for absence from the Borough except illness, and the mere fact of illness being ascribed as the reason for his absence by any Coun-

cillor would appear to be sufficient to enable him to retain his seat—unless of course a Council being dissatisfied, took upon itself certain risks. It has been said that before a Council acts it is proper to enquire as to the reason for absence.

The above remarks must be taken as applying to a Councillor who has become qualified by virtue of ownership or residence. Our correspondent's enquiry throws no light upon this subject. But in the case of a Borough Councillor who had become qualified to be a Councillor merely because he was on the register of electors, there is a special disqualification. Section 11 of the M.C.A. 1882 reads: "Provided that every person shall be qualified to be elected and to be a Councillor who is at the time of election qualified to elect to the office of Councillor . . . but if a person qualified under the last foregoing proviso ceases for six months to reside in the Borough, he shall cease to be qualified under that proviso and his office shall become vacant unless he was at the time of the election and continues to be qualified in some other manner."

Different provisions exist for Urban and Rural District Councils and Metropolitan Borough Councils. Section 46 (6) of the Local Government Act, 1894, says "if a member of a Council . . . is absent from meetings of the Council . . . for more than six months consecutively except in case of illness or for some reason approved by the Council . . . his office shall on the expiration of those months become vacant."

Here we have both a good and a bad amendment of the Municipal Corporations Act, 1882. It is clearly stated that absence from meetings is the disqualifying factor, but the Council is also given the opportunity of accepting other excuses than illness and the door to abuse seems to be open very wide.

Are Aliens Eligible for Borough Councils?

Question. Among our nominations for municipal candidate this year is a person who has been for many years a resident in this country, and whom we all thought was a native born. We find, however, that this nominee is really an American citizen. Can you tell us whether the nomination will be in order, and will the candidate who otherwise is a most desirable nominee, be permitted to sit if elected?

Answer. It is probable that ninety-nine out of every hundred of our readers would answer the question right away in the language of the proverbial young lady with an emphatic "certainly not." But that would certainly not be the right answer to this question.

Our friend's query has disclosed an omission in the Statutes, which has not previously been much discussed. The subject has a history and illustrates once more the evils to which the "Labour Organiser" has pointed arising out of piecemeal legislation on the question of election law and the franchise.

A person who is not a natural born British subject and to whom a certificate of naturalisation has not been granted is by law an alien, but we shall not attempt in this reply to designate those who may claim to be naturalised British subjects. This question depends to some extent upon whether a person was born before the Act of 4 and 5 George V. chap. 17, came into force, and the parentage and circumstances relating to the birth.

An alien even though a denizen of this country is incapable of becoming a Member of Parliament, but a naturalised citizen may become so elected. The principle here acted upon is that of allegiance to the Realm. The Municipal Corporations Act, 1882, requires no oath of allegiance such as that to which a Member of Parliament subscribes on taking the oath, and there is therefore an entirely different relationship between a Member of Parliament and the Realm to that existing between a person holding a corporate office and the body on which he sits. In the Municipal Corporations Act the declaration of acceptance of office merely requires that the holder will duly and faithfully fulfil the duties thereof according to the best of his judgment and ability.

Nevertheless, although the Municipal

Corporations Act did not expressly include aliens among those disqualified for being elected, such persons were disqualified originally by virtue of the fact that eligibility for election rested upon enrolment as a burgess, and by the franchise laws no alien was permitted to be enrolled.

The position here remained when County Councils were established by the Local Government Act, 1888, and the law was then, and is now, the same for Borough Councils as for County Councils. In 1894, on the establishment of Urban and Rural District Councils and Parish Councils, for which bodies a wider eligibility for election was established, making possible the election of persons who were not on the roll of electors, a provision was inserted debarring aliens from these bodies. And this provision has force to-day.

In 1914 the County and Borough Councils (Qualification) Act, 1914, first appears to have opened the door for the election of aliens to County and Borough Councils. Here it is enacted that "notwithstanding anything in the Municipal Corporations Act, 1882, or any other Act, any person of either sex shall be qualified to be elected and to be a Councillor or an Alderman of a County Council or of a Borough Council and may be nominated for election as a Councillor if that person has resided within the County or Borough as the case may be during the whole of the twelve months preceding the election . . . the qualification under this provision shall be alternative for and shall not repeal or take away any other qualification and shall not remove or affect any disqualification."

In 1918 the Representation of the People Act conferred a fresh eligibility for office upon property owners, and here again no mention is made of aliens and no express disqualification is enacted.

It will be seen therefore that as the law stands there is nothing whatever in the way of an alien being elected to a Borough or County Council and this view appears to be supported by the authors of the latest edition of Arnold's "Law of Municipal Corporations."

It should be added that Metropolitan Borough Councils come under the same disqualifications as Urban, Rural and Parish Councils; aliens are therefore not eligible for these bodies.

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The Lodger Franchise—An R.O. in Error.

Question. Our registration officer has disallowed the claim of several persons where it was shown that although such persons occupied one or more unfurnished rooms, they had the use of other parts of the house in common with the landlord. What course would you advise should be taken? The registration officer has promised to give his decision in writing.

Answer. Although certainly worded in a cumbersome manner we had thought, until we heard of our friend's predicament, that the Representation of the People (Equal Franchise) Act, 1928, was fairly clear. It is here laid down that "for the purpose of this section the word tenant shall include a person who occupies a room or rooms as a lodger, only where the room or rooms is or are let to that person in an unfurnished state."

The registration officer apparently desires to read into the Act that there must be an occupation which is absolute and confined to the room or rooms on which the claim is based. His point appears to be that a lodger who uses some other portion of the premises does not qualify for the exclusive use of the unfurnished room for which the statute gives him a right to be registered.

We are of opinion that the R.O. is wrong, and that it is only necessary to establish a tenancy of some unoccupied room or rooms in order to qualify. The argument presented by the R.O. is best answered by a *reductio ad absurdum*. If his argument is right the tenant of an unfurnished room or rooms ceases to be a tenant within the meaning of the Act if he uses the coal hole or any other outhouse in common or even has a joint use of the pantry, the passages or the cellar. His argument would not hold water.

Regarding the method of disputing this ruling the time for appeal to the County Court appears to have gone by for the decision we should imagine was given at the registration sittings, though it is unreasonable that the decision in writing should have been delayed for such a time as to deprive the claimant of the right of appeal. This point may be adjusted personally with the R.O. If an appeal is made costs are incurred, and although one case may, under Rule 30 of the registration rules, be selected as a test case, an instance has occurred where a County Court Judge refused to accept this procedure

and the appellants were mulct in the cost of the whole of the cases. Altogether it is a pity that registration officers should be in the position of being able to court notoriety by putting ridiculous and pettifogging constructions upon Acts of Parliament which are perfectly clear to the commonsense mind.

The Problem of Organising House-owners.

Question.—With a view to creating greater interest in the work of the Labour Party in our district, we are endeavouring to draft a programme of what we stand for, and what we consider should be undertaken by the U.D.C.

This programme would primarily be for the local U.D.C. elections next April, but also might be used as propaganda from time to time, as showing what the local Party stands for as against the present U.D.C.

The great difficulty we are up against in trying to frame this programme is the rates.

In case you don't know ——— is a district comprising, largely, people who go up to London to work, being mostly clerks or the professional classes. Most of them having already done so, or are purchasing their own houses, consequently the type of councillor who is prepared to do nothing in order that the rates shall not be increased, gets the biggest support.

We thought that you, in your wide experience, might be able to assist, and I was instructed to write you to see if you could give us any helpful suggestions.

There must be lots of districts in the country similar to ours, eaten up with this kind of suburban snobbery, so if you can help in any way we shall be very grateful.

I might add, our local council has been fairly broad-minded. Land has been acquired for playing fields, roads made up and houses built by direct labour, but the Tradesmen's Association is getting busy and using their influence with local councillors to keep down the rates.

We have only one representative on the Council which makes it very difficult, but we feel that if we could get out something, which would appeal even though it might slightly increase the rates we might make headway.

Answer.—The question here raised is not strictly within the province of the "Labour Organiser," but as it is

not entirely within the province either of any other Labour journal, we will attempt an answer.

The problem our friend raises is not entirely new. We know of one case where members of our own Party and active workers at Parliamentary elections threw in their lot at local elections with the Ratepayers' Association from much the same sentiments as our friend finds prevalent in his district. We think Socialists have realised that the keenest resistance to either nationalisation or expropriation would come from the smallest holders. This anticipation is finding proof in many places where the new householder is found to have tendencies which would out-landlord even the old regime.

We predict that the new class of house-owner is going to become an important economic and political factor in the near future. At the moment most of these people are assertive and house proud, but we would not be surprised if in a few years' time the same class is found crying to the country for some relief from the burdens it has undertaken. House property has been going down in value; if salaries and wages continue to fall while mortgage interest remains stationary and cost of repairs begin to be felt, a crisis in many homes will not be far distant.

Notwithstanding the latter frank statement, we are of the opinion that converts to Socialism will be found in increasing numbers in the class referred to. The history of our Party has not shown us that the attainment to a freer and fuller life by one section of the workers has made them less receptive to our reaching and less eager to work on our behalf and who will this class look to, but to Labour when the present ramp is over, and the Shylocks who have them in their power begin to squeeze?

Our friend's immediate difficulties centre round the question of rates and the possibility of stunt economy candidates running away with the votes.

The answer to that is that Labour Government does not necessarily mean increased rates. Our friends may obtain ample proof of this by obtaining tables showing the rates, and reductions in them, obtaining in centres where Labour has a majority. Labour stands for the *wise spending* of the ratepayers' money and that it can be trusted to administer wisely can be proved by fact and figure.

The house-owner might also be appealed to by pointing out to him that the success of the stunt economy candidate might actually mean a depreciation of his property. What keeps up the value of his property more than the amenities of the neighbourhood, clean streets, proper sanitary and public facilities, in short, all the things which Labour says are proper and desirable, and should be secured for every community? We suggest that one or two special speakers applying themselves particularly to the owner-occupier would soon be able to convince a considerable section of this class that their interest lies with Labour.

THE OFFICE SUPPLIES COMPANY LTD.

We should like to introduce our readers to a new advertiser. The Office Supplies Company are an energetic and business-like firm, who are able to put before Labour agents and secretaries a varied and up-to-date range of equipment for Labour offices and election campaigns. The goods and service are well worthy of prompt appreciation.

We invite our readers to send to this company for literature. There are typewriters in variety, office furniture of all kinds, and especially the now up-to-date and indispensable steel office furniture. The Office Supplies Company are also suppliers of loose leaf books and duplicate books, two matters that should be in high demand where efficient organisation prevails.

Our readers will also be especially interested in the Multiprint Rotary Duplicator, a low-priced high speed semi-automatic machine which actually sells at £10 complete with supplies, metal cover and board.

The Multiprint is an astonishing machine, the price of which is within the range of every local Labour Party. It is the result of years of experience in duplicator construction, and it is claimed that it is not approached in value by any other rotary duplicator on the market to-day. Thousands of copies are obtainable from one stencil, and the machine is capable of printing up to two thousand copies per hour. There is an interchangeable cylinder and as the ink is inside the cylinder, this device facilitates the use of different coloured inks.

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Should the D.L.P. Dissolve at an Election

A correspondent writes us for advice on the question of dissolving the Divisional Party when the General Election takes place. He says he has seen advice to the effect that the Party should dissolve and he wants to know our opinion on the matter.

We do not advise Divisional Labour Parties to take the procedure named as it is wholly inapplicable to modern conditions. Dissolving the Party is a relic of the orthodox methods of the two older Parties who never possessed the highly complicated machinery which is the outstanding feature of Labour Party organisation. Liberal and Tory Divisional organisation was rarely much more than a loosely-strung association of unrepresentative individuals, some of whom perhaps did not even contribute to Party funds. In some cases "membership" of such Divisional Committees would be fairly large, but the real management of the Party nearly always lay in a small Executive, often self-appointed.

When a Parliamentary contest came along the Executive was generally appointed an election committee for whose acts as agents the candidate was, of course, responsible. In order to limit such liability, and not to extend it into liability for the acts of members of the larger organisation, it became customary and convenient to "dissolve" the Party, the election committee remaining as a personal privy council to the candidate. As the Party did not then exist the candidate was in the position of being able to repudiate liability for the wrongful acts of any members of it. So far as the Party itself was concerned no harm was done, but we ourselves have never been convinced that the procedure conferred any great benefit on the candidate.

The circumstances of the Labour Party are entirely different. Our Parties are often trading concerns. There are relationships such as affiliations which cannot be dissolved and revived at one's own pleasure, and in addition there is a different attitude to Party control. Genuine dissolution at an election involves the loss of income and repudiation of contracts, affiliations and possibly debts, unless all the latter are paid beforehand. Dissolution, if it really means what the word implies, would mean the election of fresh officers after the election, and a complete new start. Dissolution in short is just a mere pretence which would deceive

no election judge, and could only result in loss and disorganisation.

Our advice to Local Labour Parties during an election is to carry on. The greatest care should be taken to warn all members not to infringe the law, but we are not subscribers to the old fear of consequences which actuated the orthodox Parties. In those days election workers were comparatively few. In these days election workers number thousands in some constituencies. The candidate's liability is not lessened therefore by dissolution and the consequent lack of discipline. The effectiveness of his organisation is very much limited if the machine is broken up into individual detachments with purely individual relationships to the candidate.

On the other hand we advise Labour Parties to reduce their meetings during an election to a minimum. Meetings interfere with the normal working of an election, but contributions must be collected and the machine is required to function in other directions.

The Executive of the Local Party is often virtually the election committee. The right way to limit liability is to take the name of every worker in the election, to make known what is illegal, and to warn everybody at workers' meetings and by notice and placard that no infringement of the law must take place.

R.P. CIRCULAR.

Since going to press the following circular to Registration Officers has been issued:—

REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE ACTS. Register of 1931.

Sir,

On previous occasions the attention of Registration Officers has been called to the desirability of making the register of electors available as soon as it has been completed. ((See Heading 1 of Circular of the 8th March, 1929, and Heading 4 of Circular of the 11th August, 1930.))

The Secretary of State hopes that the Registration Officer will again take the necessary action to make the new register both for municipal boroughs and other areas available at the earliest possible date.

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,
JOHN ANDERSON.

Home Office, Whitehall.
17th September, 1931.

Propaganda in the Yorkshire Dales

A True Story.

By DORA SEED (Labour Agent. Skipton Division).

It was really a very good campaign. We never finished a meeting with an audience of less than three. Sometimes we had as many as twenty, and once we reached the grand total of thirty-six. That was a red-letter day and filled us with pride for the rest of the week. The candidate said it was the crisis, the chairman said it was the weather, and the speaker said it was the pub (outside which we were standing), but never mind; we had an audience of thirty-six at a village meeting in the Skipton Division. Let it be recorded carefully in the annals of the Party.

Yes! It was a very good campaign. We did fourteen meetings in all, and saw some lovely scenery. In fact the scenery was so beautiful it really seemed a shame to shout at it. The speaker at Hawkswick was so impressed with the babbling brook in front of him and the mountain range behind him, that he waxed poetical. "All the world is beautiful and only man is vile," quoth he in his opening remarks. The audience looked astonished. "Say, Bill!" said one to the other, "does he mean thee or me?"

Draughton was a village which gave us a lot of trouble. The bell-ringer rang her hardest and announced her loudest; the candidate looked his important-est; the candidate's wife smiled her sweetest; and the other helpers spread themselves out their largest; but only two people could be induced to come to the meeting. We carried on, however, with these two standing stoically by, whilst the chairman and speaker made their remarks. It was the candidate's turn next. Was there anyone else in sight? Yes! Two ladies were espied peeping from behind the door of a cottage in the distance. Our hopes ran high. Would they come to the meeting? Our bell-ringer didn't wait to see. She held up the meeting and dashed over to give them a pressing invitation to attend. No! They wouldn't come, it was too cold to stand outside. Then may the meeting be held in their front garden, and would they listen if it were? Yes! That would be all right! The audience was asked to oblige by kindly moving to the new site. On the way over, however, one of them took the opportunity

to ask if there would be anything to sup after the meeting. On being told that there would not, he found he had a pressing engagement elsewhere. That was unfortunate. It was discouraging to lose 50 per cent. of our audience at one blow, but we were cheered by the thought that we should soon treble the remaining number. We held a nice little meeting in the cottage garden and we found the two ladies quite friendly towards us. We were feeling very happy about this until they told us they were visitors from Blackpool.

We got rather mixed up at Kettlewell. It was the third meeting on the Wednesday evening, and we hadn't much time to lay our plans. The meeting was advertised for the centre of the village, but it is a mistake to assume that all villages have centres. Kettlewell certainly had not one. It had a stream, a bridge, a maypole, a post-office, a grocer's shop, a green, cross-roads, a seat, and a public house, with groups of cottages round each of them, but no centre. On arrival at the village, our chauffeur, who was also our bell-ringer, left the speakers in the car and started out to look for the meeting place, also to collect up an audience if possible. The audience she collected up all right, but the meeting place she had difficulty in finding. The audience seemed to have doubts about where the meeting was to be held and decided to keep its eye on the bell-ringer. The consequence was that she soon became painfully aware that she was acting as a sort of modern pied-piper, leading a potential audience and a crowd of children round the village of Kettlewell. Nervously she dodged round the first corner and retraced her steps to the car, only to find on arriving there that the speakers had started out to look for her. Trembling in anxiety lest the audience should decide to go home, she once more toured the village, this time in frantic haste, and was happy to discover at last that the speakers and the audience had met each other on the bridge. We had a good meeting at Kettlewell.

So the campaign went on. Up hill and down dale rode the car; up and down the village streets rang the bell. What did it matter that children came out for pennyworths of ice-cream;

what did it matter that the midges seemed fonder of us than the natives; what did it matter that we were nearly shaken to pieces in our tour of the West Riding's unclassified roads? Were we not delivering the message? True we had some disappointments! There was the audience at Conistone which got on the Grassington bus. True we had some discomfort! There was the journey home from Arncliffe with six people in a four-seater car, when those in front were wedged in so tightly that it took five miles of bumping to get them all on the seat.

But we had our little triumphs too. How pleased we were in Beamsley to find a man painting his front window! There we pitched our camp on the opposite side of the road to make sure of one at least of an audience. How grateful we were in Hebden when a lady brought out a glass of water because our speakers sounded hoarse! There we appointed a new correspondent and sowed the seeds for a future party.

"Was it all worth while?" you ask. Yes! Even though we addressed less than 140 people; even though we travelled over 400 miles to do it; it was certainly worth while. That is the moral of this story, and all good stories should have morals. We are trying to win the Skipton Division for Labour.

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LANCASHIRE AND CHESHIRE LABOUR AGENTS.

We are interested to note that the Lancashire and Cheshire agents during the past year have succeeded in adding interest to their periodic meetings by arranging a series of lectures by well-known people on a variety of instructive subjects.

The following is a list of the lectures during the last twelve months.

Mr. J. P. Davies, "The Cotton Industry."

Mrs. M. A. Hamilton, M.P., "What a Labour Government could do if in Power."

Mr. C. R. Buxton, M.P., "Native Races and Conflict of Policies."

Sir O. Mosley, M.P., "What a Labour Government could do now" (January).

Mr. H. Drinkwater, "The Electoral Reform Bill."

Councillor W. Robinson, "The Education Bill."

Mr. Bray, Manchester City Treasurer, "The Financial Side of Slum Clearance."

Mr. A. Naesmith, Weavers, "The Cotton Industry from the Employees' View."

At the annual meeting which took place on the 11th September, the following officers were elected for the ensuing year. Chairman, Mr. G. B. Eddie (Blackburn); Vice-Chairman, Mr. W. Speakman, C.C. (Newton-le-Willows); Financial Secretary, Mr. F. Constantine (Clitheroe); Secretary, Mr. Ben Clare (Clayton).

Brighter Labour Parties

How Southampton is Setting About It.

That there are many local Labour Party meetings in which a spot of brightness would be welcome goes without saying, and in the "Labour Organiser" we have many times urged steps to make local meetings more attractive for the less interested and unenthusiastic section of our membership.

Mr. A. Rose, of Southampton, in the following circular to the officers of his Party makes some suggestions for creating "A Brighter Labour Party." We understand it is proposed presently, if circumstances permit, to follow up this circular by a questionnaire to all members with the object of arriving at some conclusions regarding the attractiveness, interest and usefulness of the local meetings.

SOUTHAMPTON LABOUR PARTY.

Dear Comrade,

A BRIGHTER LABOUR PARTY.

In addition to getting persons to *join* the Labour Party, it is very necessary to give some attention to the problem of how to *keep* them in the Party. There appear to be a good many people in Southampton who used to belong to the Party.

It is suggested that a person who joins the Party must have some point of common interest with us, and unless that point disappears there is no reason why he should drop out again other than through removal or some such cause.

In considering how to keep members, the first thing to discover is the member's point of common interest. This may be—in addition to the political outlook of the Party—a variety of things; such as attraction of meetings and speakers; personal influence; outings, bazaars, and social work; children's parties, etc. Whatever the interests may be, it is desirable that the programme of activities in your ward should be such as to satisfy the interests of all members as far as that may be possible.

It is suggested that Ward Association and Women's Section meetings should be made as bright and interesting as possible, either by a speaker on some subject of interest — not necessarily

purely current political matters — or music or a social during part of the afternoon or evening, according to the tastes of your members. The routine, and somewhat hum-drum work—such as reading these long circulars which I sometimes have to send you—should be done by your Executive Committee, and submitted to the Ward Association meetings, or section meeting, in the form of bright brief recommendations, which can be easily understood, and accepted or referred back to the Committee. (In the same way our work at the Centre is thoroughly digested by the Executive Committee before it is submitted to the General Committee, and we are able to give time to matters of interest and importance instead of wasting much time over misunderstandings and routine matters).

Regular Ward Association and Women's Section meetings are very necessary, and it would be found to be a great help to fix your meeting on say, the first Monday in each month—or whatever day is most suitable—and your Executive Committee meetings to be fixed to take place seven days prior to the Section or Association meeting. If matters received during this period of seven days are referred to the Executive (unless urgent) it will be found that your ordinary business can be disposed of in about an hour or less, and the rest of the time can be devoted to a bright speaker, or a social afternoon or evening, or whatever is most likely to interest your members.

In planning your arrangements for this winter, it is hoped that your Committee will adopt this suggestion for a Brighter Labour Party as far as they are able, and if it were possible to make a canvass of your members and lapsed members to ascertain from them what it is about the Labour Party that interests them most, you would find the result most useful and interesting.

Your observations on this circular and note of results of any action taken will be much appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

A. ROSE,
Secretary.

54, Henstead Road,
Southampton.
1st September, 1931.

THE LABOUR PARTY

League of Youth

Monthly Bulletin

EDITOR :

W. ARTHUR PEACOCK.

No. 15 (NEW SERIES)

SEPTEMBER, 1931

THE POLITICAL CRISIS

LABOUR'S CALL TO THE NATION.

THE political situation has been transformed by the resignation of the Labour Government and by the action of the Prime Minister in undertaking the formation of a Government in collaboration with the leaders of the Tory and Liberal Parties.

Events have created for the Labour Party a situation of great difficulty. The position of members of the Government who declined to become responsible for demands made by Tory die-hards and by anonymous outside influences that have been attacking the unemployment insurance scheme is already being subjected to much criticism and misrepresentation.

Unity is Strength.

It is important that members of the League of Youth should be thoroughly conversant with these developments and should take steps to ensure that they understand the point of view that has been taken up by the Labour Party and the General Council of the T.U.C.

One thing is quite certain. It is already evident that the unity of the Labour and Trade Union movement has been preserved by the action of the Labour ministers who resigned when it became clear that the Government was being pressed to assume responsibility for increasing demands for retrenchment in social expenditure, and particularly when it was seen that the attack was being mainly directed upon the system of unemployment insurance which has saved the workless people from the worst ravages of unemployment and has assisted to maintain the established Trade Union standards of wages and conditions of Labour.

There is now in existence an emergency Government — which includes Ministers who cannot claim to be the

chosen representatives of the Labour Party. Whether they and their colleagues in the new Government can carry into effect the new policy they have adopted remains to be seen. The Executive Committee of the Labour Party, the General Council of the T.U.C., and the Consultative Committee of the Parliamentary Labour Party have met and have registered their opposition to the emergency Government. The attitude of these bodies is reflected in the manifesto issued in their names, and which is reprinted here so that members of the League may be acquainted with this important declaration of policy.

The Manifesto.

A FINANCIAL crisis, the true causes of which have not been publicly explained, has brought about the sudden resignation of the Labour Government.

Forces in finance and politics made demands which no Labour Government could accept.

A new Coalition Government, for which the Labour Movement repudiates all responsibility, has been formed. It is a Government of persons acting without authority from the people.

It is determined to attack the standard of living of the workers in order to meet a situation caused by a policy pursued by private banking interests in the control of which the public has no part.

It seeks to enforce a complete change in national policy; not because the Nation's resources have suddenly diminished, not because the Nation cannot afford to provide for its unemployed, not because the Budget cannot be balanced, but primarily because financial interests have decided that this country

is setting a bad example to other countries in taxing the rich to provide for the necessities of the poor.

Fundamentally, it is an attempt to reverse the social policy which, in this country, has within limits provided for the unemployed, the aged and the sick, the disabled, the orphaned, and the widowed. Unemployment benefit is attacked on the ground that it strengthens resistance to wage reductions. These are the motives which impel the new Coalition Government in its policy of drastic cuts in social expenditure.

The new Government's policy has yet to be fully disclosed, but the knowledge that it is irrevocably committed to serious cuts in unemployment benefits, cuts in wages and salaries in National and Local Services, a curtailment of expenditure on work which is at present providing employment for thousands of wage earners, and cuts in Public Health and Education has roused the entire Labour Movement to determined opposition.

Equality of Sacrifice.

The justification offered for these methods is the existence of a financial crisis which has been aggravated beyond measure by deliberately alarmist statements in sections of the press, and by the fact that a protracted campaign has created the impression abroad that Great Britain is on the verge of bankruptcy. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

Four thousand millions of British capital are invested abroad. Great Britain is still one of the greatest creditor countries. We are still adding to our capital assets. The taxable capacity of the country has not been exhausted. The immediate situation can be met without further depleting the slender means of the poor and without restricting National and Local expenditure directed to the development of the country's resources. If the will were present we could overcome the immediate difficulty by mobilising the country's foreign investment, by a temporary suspension of the Sinking Fund, by taxing fixed interest bearing securities and other unearned income which had benefited by the fall in prices and by measures to reduce the burden of War debts.

The phrase "equality of sacrifice" has been invoked as a justification for cuts in social expenditure, but no com-

parable sacrifice has so far been demanded from the wealthier sections of the community.

Sacrifices by the workers are intended to be certain, sacrifices by other sections uncertain. The proposals to economise at the expense of the poor are not only unjust but economically unsound. They will increase unemployment and aggravate the basic problem underlying the present crisis by reducing the consuming power of the masses.

Cuts in wages and salaries in National and Local services will lead to attempts to enforce similar cuts in industry generally, and bring about embittered conflict and industrial chaos.

Great Britain whose social standards and services have greatly contributed to the raising of the standards of life throughout the world is now, under pressure from international and national financial interests, to take the lead in a process of world-wide degradation.

A Clarion Call.

The effective resistance of the Labour Movement for National reconstruction and international co-operation, including a reconsideration of the problem of debts and reparations, provides the only basis for the restoration of credit and the re-establishment of world prosperity.

The forces of Labour are vitally concerned with the national interest, but we emphatically reject the view that this can only be secured by the impoverishment of the workers.

We therefore call upon the masses of the people and all men and women of good-will to stand firmly against the New Government and to rally to the aid of the Labour Movement in its defence of true National interests and its constructive efforts towards the new social order.

On behalf of
The Trades Union Congress General Council :—

ARTHUR HAYDAY (*Chairman*)

WALTER M. CITRINE (*Secretary*)

The National Executive of the Labour Party :—

STANLEY HIRST (*Chairman*)

ARTHUR HENDERSON (*Secretary*)

The Consultative Committee of the Parliamentary Labour Party :—

JAMES BARR (*Chairman*)

H. SCOTT LINDSAY (*Secretary*)

August 27, 1931.

Keir Hardie's Advice

IN the early days of the Socialist movement, when branches of the Independent Labour Party and other socialist societies were being set up in the various towns it happened that enthusiastic secretaries would often secure the services of six or eight speakers of national fame for a meeting in the hope that the array of talent would result in attracting large audiences. Sometimes the speakers would travel long distances only to find a tiny audience awaiting to hear them. Not only was this a waste of time, effort and money, but it also often brought ridicule upon the cause. David Lowe, one of the old Socialist stalwarts tells us in "From Pit to Parliament" that Keir Hardie made it a rule not to accept invitations to speak at meetings where other well-known men and women would be present. This was done, not in any spirit of egotism, but in order to ensure that the movement's supply of speaking talent should be sensibly distributed. Mr. Lowe remarks that Keir Hardie's hints on how to organise meetings, directed to people who were "kindness itself" but in many instances "also thoughtless," were not without mustard:—

Rules for Secretaries.

We give them below so that readers may judge for themselves and so that they may be able to put them to good use.

1. In getting up a big meeting take the best hall available.
2. Advertise well—big bills, big type. The public take a cause at the measure of faith displayed to adherents. If the bill and the hall be small and dingy so probably will be the audience.
3. If necessary make a small charge for part of the hall.
4. Send the speaker a note of the best trains to travel by.
5. Meet him at the station, have a nice refreshment ready for him. To be lugged off to some dirty, sloppy coffee house does not put a speaker in the happiest frame of mind.
6. Don't stop to introduce your "distinguished" friend to every local nobody you meet. Your distinguished friend is bored

thereby and resents being put on show.

7. Have the ante-room open and the gas lit. Hanging about the passage or staircase while someone hunts for the janitor or the key, leads to profanity.
8. Have all—from speakers and resolutions—ready before the night of the meeting and the time each is to be allowed to speak mapped out.
9. If possible, begin by singing a Labour song.
10. Have plenty of literature on sale.
11. Don't go up to the speaker at the close with a look as if you have designs upon his watch and enquire what his expenses will be, especially if he has agreed beforehand.
12. Cut these rules out and hang them up where they can be seen by all men.

The advice contained in the 12th rule is one which might well be followed by League of Youth Secretaries.

Miss Barnett, Mr. Paul Williams and Mr. Maurice Hackett will be attending the Labour Party Conference at Scarborough and will be glad to speak at League meetings in the vicinity. Secretaries should write them c/o League of Youth, Transport House South, Smith Square, Westminster, S.W.1.

Mr. Williams has received a number of requests from German comrades wishing to correspond with members of League of Youth. Comrades wishing to correspond in English or German are asked to communicate with Mr. Paul Williams, c/o Transport House.

The important point for League members to realise is that the "National" Government is only an emergency Government. It is not anticipated that its life will be a very long one. A General Election within a few months is very likely. Preparations for this must be made. Members of the League must give all the aid that they can to their local Parties so that local organisations may be strengthened in good time before the contest takes place.

A Prisoner in Vienna

By GWYN JONES.

I AM a prisoner in Austria — and neither Arthur Henderson nor my British passport can secure my release. However, I am not a pale captive in a picturesque but damp dungeon beneath an Austrian fortress, nor yet am I temporarily detained in the less romantic but more hygienic confines of a police-cell. To be brief, I am lying with a broken knee-cap in the local Krankenhaus of an Austrian lakeside town—Krankenhaus, by the way, isn't as bad as it sounds. It is merely the hospital.

"We are sorry," you say, "and we hope the knee will soon be better, but er — really, we are not interested in clumsy people falling around the place and breaking a bone or two!" Wait, comrades! There is more in this than a gammy leg and an unlucky holiday-maker. There is courage and self-sacrifice; there is comradeship and internationalism. There is friendship which is a concrete expression of that greeting "Freundschaft!"

"All right," you say, "get on with it." This is the story.

On Thursday, July 29th, we commenced our ascent of this rugged giant. There were thirteen of us, eleven English and two Austrians. We climbed by the well-known route of the Nature Friends, a Socialist open-air organisation. The way was hard, but not exceptionally dangerous, for a stoutly-fixed wire rope gave a sure grip for the hands. We clambered, scrambled, heaved and hauled ourselves over the craggy limestone. We halted once for a very rough meal, eaten with rather grimy hands, and paused occasionally to admire the wonderful views.

We began our descent at about 8.30 a.m. by an easier route than before. The way was by a narrow zig-zag path with here and there steep drops carved in rough steps. It required care, but did not appear dangerous. We spread out in single file. I was last man. Half-an-hour from the top we stopped to look at some chamois careering across an incredibly steep slope. We recommenced our descent, and I saw that I must negotiate a very narrow, very steep bend. I stepped forward, and the next instant, with no warning, with no preliminary slips or stumble, I found myself hurtling downward. As I fell past her, one of the

Austrians grabbed at my rucksack, but it slipped through her grasp. Had she held on she would have been dragged with me. On I bounded down the mountain side, from rock to rock and ledge to ledge, snatching vainly at stones and bushes. I flew past my horrified fellow-travellers on the zig-zag path and I landed on a great rock on my back. My rucksack took the shock and I bounced off like a football. Below me on the path stood Ken Robbins, of Southgate, and the London A.C. Incredible as it sounds I could see him distinctly. As I shot by him he flung himself at me, tackled and held me. We lay in a heap. His ready courage undoubtedly saved my life at the risk of his own.

I had fallen about 65 feet, my left knee had a gaping wound, and I was plentifully decorated with cuts and scratches. It was necessary to carry me down the mountain. To me it looked an impossible task, but it had to be done.

So began a nightmare journey. I was placed on an upturned bench and lifted by six sturdy souls. They were an assorted company. There were three brawny Austrian mountaineers, one a tourist, one the hutkeeper, and one a surveyor. The other three were the Viennese girl, Ken Robbins and Paul Williams, our national chairman. I was carried, raised, lowered and slid along the steep and narrow pathway with its numerous obstacles. At last I was transferred to a stretcher and soon we were on a winding mountain road. We swung down this for a long distance, and then descended the lakeside by hundreds of steps. From there I was carried by rowing boat and motor ambulance to the Krankenhaus at Gmunden.

I can never forget the kindness which has been shown me in this hospital. I can never forget the self-sacrificing courage of the Austrians who helped to carry me down. I was a foreigner, yet despite that, perhaps because of it, they toiled painfully to save me.

So here I lie and read and dream, wishing I were back in England, especially in these days of tangled politics. Austria is a splendid country, her people are a noble race, but England is England, and home. And, oh! for a cup of English tea!